

# PRACTICAL POINTS ON PRIVATE NURSING

IN CHARGE OF  
ISABEL MCISAAC

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## TRAVELLING WITH A PATIENT

By MARY CLOUD BEAN  
Chicago

Most of the rules for the general traveller at home and abroad apply as well to nurses as to other people. Add to any good epitome of these, selected from the current articles of the day in magazines or in works on travel, a few points on medicines and other exclusively nursing matters, supply your nurse with a little previous experience in travelling alone, and equip her with the common-sense essential to every nurse, and a trip across the continent of America, or over the ocean and through Europe with a patient, is rather a simple affair. Naturally, it is not to be regarded as the nurse's trip, her one opportunity of seeing the world. Though the nurse may and does, as a rule, obtain much knowledge and not a little pleasure out of a long journey, first of all must come the patient and the patient's comfort.

Travelling with a very ill person is never to be commended for ease, either for the patient or the nurse, and in America a great difficulty arises at the very beginning in boarding the cars—our sleeping-cars will not admit of the introduction of a stretcher except through the window. A patient too ill to be borne to his berth in the arms may be made fairly comfortable in the baggage-car, on a cot or stretcher, for short distances. Do not forget the hospital ambulance where this may be employed.

French and English cars lend themselves more readily than ours to the entrance of a stretcher, and, of course, it is comparatively simple to take a patient on board ship in such a manner. An obliging ship-carpenter has been known to construct the stretchers for landing a patient, and they will oblige one to any extent almost on board ship with articles from the ship's hospital, provided they have them. It is unwise to depend too largely on their being found there. Both steward and stewardess are very much at the service of the patient and nurse and are usually skilful in helping, for they are more or less trained by the many

miserable travellers who become unfit for the deck. They expect a pretty good fee.

As to railway trains, there is much yet to be thought out for the comfort of ill people, unless one can afford an American drawing-room car or take a state-room. In this, with a well-stocked buffet car, unless the milk supply gives out, there is little else to be desired. The ordinary day coaches in Europe, first or second class, also third in England, permit of considerable comfort, and by taking a whole compartment one is quite private. A good bed may be arranged on the long seats by utilizing a rug or two and pillows, which should always be at hand, in a strap. You will need rugs in Europe for warmth, for even in summer it is often cold on the cars, and winter travelling imperatively demands them. Hot-water bags, filled just before starting out, are useful, and if more hot water is unobtainable en route, your alcohol lamp and cup will make it simple to reheat the water and refill the bag. Take along your medicines and nursing appliances in a bag set aside for the purpose, if you need many, and do not skimp them. It may be your fate to find you have left behind the very thing you need if you economize too closely in space. It is absolutely essential, also, to have with one everything necessary for the night in the way of clothing packed in a small hand-bag in case of tardiness on the part of trunks. Porters are usually on hand to carry bags for small fees. If very necessary toilet arrangements are sometimes lacking on European trains, they may be found at the stations, where there are sometimes ten-minute stops and frequent changes of cars.

In starting on a journey allow plenty of time for buying ticket and looking after baggage, especially in Europe, and remember that the Continental mind, at least, does not know the meaning of American speed. The Swiss official who cannot weigh and label his steamer trunks in three minutes may be incomprehensible to the New York man who misses his train thereby, but he exists nevertheless. There being but little free baggage allowed in Europe, this weighing must always be done. The same rule for nursing articles applies as well to clothing in travelling,—take all you need, for while too much baggage means burdensome packing, too little entails deprivation and possible shabbiness.

When going to Europe it is advisable to have prescriptions translated into the language and pharmacopœia of the countries in which you expect to travel, else it may be impossible to get them filled—and without a prescription a nurse must present her badge or diploma in order to obtain even simple *nux vomica* from a chemist abroad. Purchase nursing supplies, as far as possible, at home, especially rubber articles, which are very expensive across the waters. Clinical thermometers are

scaled, of course, according to the usage of the country, and one would better take along a familiar Fahrenheit.

Make your journeys by easy stages, especially in Europe, where the hotels, even in small towns, are comfortable, and an over-night stop is easily arranged. Take top-floor rooms when possible; they are quieter and cheaper, and as there is usually a lift one need not consider stops. Good food, well cooked, is far more common in Europe than America. Restaurant bills of fare, of course, simplify the selection of an invalid's meals, but if table-d'hôte is preferred for reasons of economy, a dish may often be exchanged from the restaurant menu. It is rather a good idea to inspect the bills of fare before mealtime and arrange for what is wanted.

On foreign restaurant cars good food and milk in small quantities are usually obtainable. Diligences stop for meals at good hotels as a rule. If milk is essential for an ocean voyage, it may be taken in any quantity and placed aboard in cold storage; but see that it is really in cold storage, or you may find it turning sour. Milk practically sterilized will keep anywhere, and inquiry at a good drug store will enlighten one as to how it may be obtained. A moist towel wrapped about a bottle of milk or water will insure the coolness of the one and the sweetness of the other for some hours. People who are puzzled about the system of fees in Europe may settle the question of amount by putting aside one-tenth of the hotel bill for fees, to be distributed in ratio of services to the various employees of the hotel; and the trouble of distribution disappears when to the management of the hotel is entrusted the bestowal thereof on its employees. But it is really worth one's personal attention, after all, to receive the gracious thanks of faithful servitors. Give a fee, however small, to everyone who does you the slightest service. Servants in Europe really serve, and as they receive the meagrest of compensation from their employers, it is their due to be well paid by the travellers, and hotel bills being so much less for corresponding comfort in Europe than in America, this feeing is no very heavy drain upon one's purse. Remember that not two or three individuals, but anywhere from ten to twenty-five servants look for fees each week from the visitors at a Continental hotel.

Learn the language of the country in which you expect to travel, if possible, especially if this country be France, for the French approve of their own tongue, and it is current in nearly every country. However, this point is not vital, for the average European possesses a good notion of pantomime, and a person of intelligence soon picks up the words necessary to ask for things anywhere.

Do not make the mistake of trying to see too much in travelling,

especially of exhibitions and picture-galleries; they are fatiguing even to strong people, and for invalids practically impossible. Get at the people of the country and their life if you can, read your Baedecker, see a few typical buildings, and enjoy the scenery, and you will have received all there is for you out of a trip with a patient through Europe.

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## ANTISEPTIC SOLUTIONS AND DUSTING POWDERS

By JESSIE BREEZE  
Chicago

THE following statistics have been compiled from information obtained from eight of the best hospitals in the large cities of the United States, the methods of making solutions in all these hospitals varying little in essence, if a trifle in detail. All are made with sterile water; whether from a modern steam sterilizer, or boiled an hour in a closed vessel on an ordinary stove, makes little difference in the results obtained.

Only one hospital reported using *green soap* as an antiseptic, but it is certain every one of them use it daily—either in the form of paste or tincture—to cleanse and begin the sterilization of hands and the field of operation.

*Bichloride of mercury* is used in all the hospitals in strengths varying from 1 to 500 to 1 to 10,000. In some it is made from tablets which contain, besides the mercury salt, ammonium chloride, which helps to make a more stable solution. In other hospitals the corrosive sublimate solution has a double quantity of common salt added for the same purpose.

*Carbolic acid* from one per cent. to five per cent. is used in all but one hospital, and is made by adding sterile water to the crystals, or ninety-five per cent., and mixing thoroughly. Alcohol or glycerine may be added, but are of no particular advantage. If ninety-five per cent. is used, cold water can be shaken with it; but if the melted crystals, boiling water only can make a thoroughly safe mixture. All but one hospital reports the use of *boric acid* in saturated or half-saturated solutions, easily made by putting the required amount of crystals on a sterile linen or cotton filter and pouring boiling water slowly through.

*Permanganate of potassium*, saturated solution, or the color of port wine, with *oxalic acid* solution for bleaching, comes next, only two reports failing to mention it. One hospital sterilizes it after it is made, the others make it as needed, a very good way being to put